DEMOCRATIC
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NO COME-BACK FOR KRUPP & GENERALS

There will be no come-back for arms kings, landlords and militarists in the German Democratic Republic, Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl told the People's Chamber on November 2nd.

"The people of the German Democratic Republic will oppose every attempt to disorganise our work of construction through lies, slanders and hostile activity" he said.

There was a steady process of democratisation in the Democratic Republic, Prime Minister Grotewohl declared, a process which had begun in 1953, and not only recently as in some other socialist countries. He stated that this democratisation did not mean a 'liberalisation' consisting of the restoration of capitalism.

In his government declaration Prime Minister Grotewohl appealed once again for discussions between the two halves of Germany as the only way of achieving a united state. "The key problem at the present time is not the question of free elections" he stated. "It is the question of creating the proper guarantees for the peace-loving and democratic character of a future unified German state."

(Full report of Prime Minister Grotewohl's speech on page 187.)

JET AIRLINERS FOR EAST GERMANY

Fifty–Passenger Planes in Production Soon

Democratic Germany will soon be producing jet airliners, a model for which is shown on this page.

Construction work on the new jet liner, a medium sized 50 passenger plane powered by four jet motors, is already well ahead, it was stated early in October. A date has not yet been set for test flights, but the constructors are confident that the plane will be in series production before 1960.

All preliminary work on the plane is being done at the Dresden Aircraft Centre, which was only established in May 1955. The aircraft centre has its own airfield, with runways capable of handling the largest jet planes.

At present, the Aircraft Centre is producing two-engined propellor air liners of the type IL-14. All necessary blue-prints for the plane were provided by the Soviet Union, where it has been in production for several years. The first IL-14 built in Democratic Germany made its test flights in May this year, and series production is now under way. A first series of one hundred planes of this type is planned. Some of the hundred will be supplied to Lufthansa, the East German air line, and others will be exported.

A model of the planned jet-liner

To guarantee a steady supply of technicians, the Dresden Technical High School recently established an Air Transport Faculty, and several hundred aircraft engineers are already in training at the Dresden Engineering Institute.

(No civil aircraft are being built in West Germany. All efforts of the aircraft industry there are concentrated on the construction of military planes for the new West German Luftwaffe.)

PRODUCTION RISES — BUT NOT ENOUGH

Industrial production in Democratic Germany is steadily rising, but is still lagging slightly behind the targets set in the Five Year Plan.

This was officially revealed in the report on the economic plan in the third quarter of 1956, released in Berlin on November 1st.

"The fulfillment of the economic plan in the third quarter of 1956 was not satisfactory" the report stated. "Great efforts must be made in the fourth quarter to take up part of the slack so that the economic plan may be fulfilled in the most important sectors."

The report showed that overall industrial output was 8 % higher in the three month period under review than it had been in the same period of the previous year, but that this was three percent below the targets set.

For the first time the plan report quoted hard figures in tons for the main industrial products, instead of confining itself to percentages as previously. These figures showed that while there had been big increases in the output of most industrial products, there had been an actual decline in some key industries compared to 1955.

Production of hard coal and iron ore, for instance, was slightly below the 1955 average, and there had been a marked drop in the production of rolling-mill equipment. On the other hand there had been a big all-round increase in production in most branches of the chemical industry and in many types of machine tools.

The economic report showed that the position in agriculture was satisfactory, with bigger crop yields in almost all categories, despite unfavourable weather. There had been big increases in export trade, with exports to such countries as Egypt, India, Syria and Burma reaching about double the 1955 figures.

Adenauers Party Drops Votes

Big Socialist Gains

Municipal elections in three provinces of West Germany on October 28th brought big gains to the Social Democrats and a big drop in the votes of most other parties, particularly Chancellor Adenauer's Christian Democratic Party.

The gain in Social Democratic votes was partly explained by the fact that following the ban on the Communist Party most former Communist votes have now gone to the Social Democrats.

Here are the percentage of votes cast for the main parties in the latest elections, with the percentage votes at the elections to provincial parliaments in 1954 given in brackets:

Hessen Province
Social Democrats 47 % (43)
Christian Democrats 21 % (24)
Free Democrats 9 % (20)

North Rhine Westphalia Province
Social Democrats 44 % (34)
Christian Democrats 38 % (41)
Free Democrats 10 % (11)

Lower Saxony Province
Social Democrats 38 % (35)
Christian Democrats 20 % (27)
Free Democrats 7 % (7)

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More Progressives Jailed in W. Germany

"Thought control" sentences ranging from eight months to three years imprisonment were imposed by the West German Federal Court in Karlsruhe on November 2nd on eight progressive men and women.

The accused, six from East Germany and two from West Germany, were found guilty of "endangering the state and forming secret societies". Their "crime" had consisted of attempting to organise an all-German delegation to the Big Four conference in Geneva in July 1955.

TRADE SHORTS

The new trade agreement between the German Democratic Republic and Yugoslavia involves trade to the value of ten million dollars this year. East Germany will supply fertilisers, various chemical and pharmaceutical raw materials and products, electrical engineering equipment and, machinery, in exchange for fresh and dried fruit, canned goods, tobacco, some types of industrial equipment and timber.

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A trade agreement totalling 220 million Danish crowns was signed in Copenhagen between four Danish industrial concerns and the East German Chamber of Foreign Trade. A payments agreement was also concluded between the Danish National Bank and the East German "Deutsche Notenbank".

THEATRE FIGURES

There are now 89 theatres with a total of 61,700 seats in the German Democratic Republic.

14 big theatres were restored since 1945, including the State Opera House in Berlin, the National Theatre in Weimar and the State Playhouse in Dresden.

19 new theatres were built, mostly smaller theatres in medium-sized towns and children's theatres, including the chidren's theatre in Berlin which has 900 seats.

Audiences totalling about seventeen and a half million saw just under 30,000 theatre performances during the 1955/56 season, about 30 per cent of them guest performances in country districts and in factory club theatres.

Tickets cost between 2.50 marks (a skilled worker's wage for about an hour's work) and 13 marks in Berlin, and between 1 and 5 marks in the Republic.

NO COME-BACK FOR KRUPP

Excerpts from Prime Minister Grotewohl's Speech to the People's Chamber of the German Democratic Republic on November 2nd 1956

"The working people of the German Democratic Republic do not intend to allow the Flicks and the Krupps to grab back their factories, which are now nationally-owned enterprises. They have no intention of endangering their social gains. The people of the German Democratic Republic are opposed to a return to the rule of the militarists and the junkers. They will oppose every attempt to disorganise our work of construction through lies, slanders and hostile activity.

"The millionaire press in West Germany and foreign countries at the moment is systematically spreading lies about the situation in the German Democratic Republic. This campaign is connected with the attempts of certain aggressive circles to use for their own criminal purposes the process of democratisation and the struggle against the personality cult. These circles also include the German Democratic Republic in their plans.

"So that there should be no misapprehension I declare: Our democratisation does not mean a 'liberalisation' consisting of the restoration of capitalism. In the German Democratic Republic, as in other People's Democracies, the working class, in alliance with all other working sections of the population will forge ahead with the policy of peace, of international unterstanding, and of building socialism.

"The Government of the German Democratic Republic calls on the entire population to look at what they have built. Should the results of ten years of peaceful reconstruction be destroyed? We must work with one another, and not against one another. The future of mankind lies in socialism, not capitalism.

Lessons to Learn

"Today we are faced with the task of seeing what lessons we have to learn from the 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and the events in Poland and Hungary. I do not intend to speak here of the hate-propaganda and 'advice' coming from our enemies in the West. All these 'proposals' are not designed to get rid of possible mistakes in the German Democratic Republic so that the Republic should be strengthened in its march to socialism. This advice comes from enemies of socialism who have solely the aim of wiping out all socialist achievements, and who want to provoke a development which would lead, as in Hungary, to chaos and the destruction of all order.

"The German Democratic Republic does not intend to take such a path. We wish, in cooperation with all men of good will in the German Democratic Republic, to bring our homeland peace, prosperity and unity.

"The self-cleansing and the new path shown by the 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was not entirely new for us in all respects. The flames of counter-revolution on June 17th 1953 (when there were disturbances in various parts of the German Democratic Republic, ed.) led us at that time to check up on the path we were taking, and led to the solution of problems which only came to the surface in other countries several years later.

"We do not intend to claim that we are particularly clever, but already in 1953 we took steps towards broad democratisation, a problem which is now receiving much attention in the People's Democracies.

"There is no reason at all why there should be any unrest in the German Democratic Republic on any such problems as the further extension of the rights of citizens, the guaranteeing of socialist legality, and a just administration. I should like to limit myself to the remark that the Government does not regard the question of socialist legality as something which can be settled once and for all by administrative measures, but rather as a developing process which

DEMOCRATIC GERMANY CONDEMNS AGGRESSION IN EGYPT

British and French aggression against Egypt is a breach of international law, and must be roundly condemned, Otto Grotewohl, Prime Minister of the German Democratic Republic, stated on November 2nd.

Prime Minister Grotewohl, in a government announcement to the People's Chamber, stated:

"The aggression against Egypt reveals the full brutality of imperialist colonial policy. Imperialist colonial policy is and remains a policy of suppression, naked power, fire and sword.

"The Anglo-French action is a breach of international law which is condemned by all peaceable people. Disputes must be settled by negotiation, not by force. The Government of the German Democratic Republic opposes the measures taken by the Governments of Britain and France, and assures the government and the people of Egypt of its sympathy in their fight for national independence.

demands the greatest attention of the government and all responsible forces in public life. The better the population helps us in overcoming shortcomings, the more quickly we shall get ahead. But in all these questions there were never such mistakes and abuses as occurred in other countries. As a result the measures which we have taken and will still take have a different character from the measures in other countries.

Greetings for Poland, Hungary

"We send our greetings to the entire Polish people, to the working class, the peasants, the scientists and the artists; may the road to socialism bring them happiness and prosperity. We want to live with the Polish people as good neighbours and true friends.

"The bloody white terror raging in Hungary prevents us from making a final judgment on our relations to Hungary. But this does not prevent us from expressing our deep sympathy for the revolutionary Hungarian working class and all Hungarians who love peace.

Factory Councils?

"In the discussions in several socialist countries the question has arisen as to whether it would not be better to put the factories under the direct control of the workers, and whether uneconomic agricultural cooperatives should not be dissolved.

"We have no objection at all to a thorough study of the question of workers' control in the socialist factories. We do not believe it right, however, to solve such questions in an administrative manner. Factory workers, trade unionists and economic specialists could hold conferences to discuss the problem of workers' control in the existing economic framework in the German Democratic Republic. But for this purpose it is not necessary to have a disturbance of the whole economy, a disturbance which could only have a deleterious effect on living conditions.

"In the agricultural sector many agricultural production cooperatives have developed very well, and are today a pattern for all peasants. Other cooperatives still have difficulties, but it is not in the interests of agriculture or the interests of the peasants to dissolve the cooperatives which have shown shortcomings and mistakes. On the contrary, such cooperatives should be helped to overcome their shortcomings and mistakes. The idea of collective work and organisation is better than individual effort in agriculture just as it is in industry.

Relations with the Soviet Union

"On October 30th 1956 the Soviet Union published a declaration on cooperation between the Soviet Union and the other socialist states. This declaration stated that the socialist states could only base their relations with each other on the principles of equality, territorial integrity, independence, sovereignty and non-intervention. We greet this declaration made by the Soviet Union. Relations between the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic have developed in accordance with these principles. Following the formation of our Republic the Soviet Union speedily ended all limitations on our sovereignty which had been imposed as a result of the war. Relations between the two states are on a fraternal basis, and the Soviet Union has often gone beyond its obligations in helping our Republic in a most unselfish manner.

Withdrawal of Troops

"The presence of Soviet troops on the territory of the German Democratic Republic is a result of the policy of robbery practiced by the German imperialists and fascists. The fact that Soviet troops are still stationed on German soil today is solely due to the policy of those circles wihch have hitherto prevented the creation of a unified peace-loving German state, and which have not abandoned the dangerous and hopeless idea of bringing about a solution by force.

"The Soviet troops stationed in the German Democratic Republic do a great service to the working people of our Republic, by guarding peace and protecting our peaceful and creative work.

"The Government of the German Democratic Republic has repeatedly made the proposal that there should be negotiations on the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Germany. The Soviet Union has expressed its willingness to take this step, and has made a proposal to the western powers on an agreement to withdraw all foreign troops. The western powers rejected the proposal, and the West German Government did nothing to prevent this rejection.

"The continuance of the occupation of Germany hurts the feeling of all good Germans: for this reason the Government of the German Democratic Republic will continue to press for the withdrawal of all occupation troops.

Reunification Prospects

"The creation of a united, peaceful, democratic and independent German state is the main task for our people. The two states existing on German territory — the German Democratic Republic and the German Federal Republic — bear full responsibility for the peaceful reunification of our homeland, and for ensuring the security interests of the European peoples. For this reason, negotiations between the two German states and an understanding between the two states are absolutely necessary.

"There can be no reunification if the German Democratic Republic is not recognised. The key problem at the present time is not the question of free elections: it is the question of creating the proper guarantees for the peace-loving and democratic character of a future unified German state. For this reason it is necessary to change the present policy of the Government of the German Federal Republic. It is necessary to end the rule of the monopolists and

militarists in West Germany, and to deprive them of the opportunity of exterting a decisive influence on political and economic life."

Prime Minister Grotewohl repeated proposals his government had made in the past for immediate negotiation between the governments in East and West Germany on a number of specific subjects. The proposals may be summarised as follows:

1. Limitation of the armed forces in both parts of Germany, and no conscription. After reunification Germany should form part of a zone of limited armaments. No atomic weapons should be stationed on German soil.

2. Hitlerite generals and other revenge-seekers should be removed from the West German government apparatus and army. The arms monopolies should be nationalised.

3. All foreign troops should be withdrawn step by step from Germany.

4. The ban on the Communist Party in West Germany should be cancelled, and all militarist organisations should be banned.

5. The governments of the two German states should cooperate on a general programme to bring the two states nearer together, and representatives of both parliaments should negotiate on reunification.

45-HOUR WEEK & HIGHER PENSIONS

Speedy Action on Social Problems

The 45-hour working week will be introduced in various industries in the German Democratic Republic from the beginning of 1957, Deputy Prime Minister Walter Ulbricht announced in the People's Chamber on November 3rd. Big increases in old-age and other pensions will go into effect on December 1st this year, so that pensioners will get their increased pensions before Christmas, he also stated.

Walter Ulbricht, speaking in the name of the Socialist Unity Party, of which he is First Secretary, announced that concrete proposals on the reduction of the working week would be introduced in the People's Chamber in the near future. "This reduction in working hours will serve to preserve the health of the workers, and give them more time for their families and amusement. The reduction is not a present from the government: it is the result of the efforts of the workers in the factories."

Speaking on the question of increasing workers' control in the factories, dealt with on the previous day by Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl (see page 188), Walter Ulbricht stated:

"We believe that the workers in the factories should feel themselves directly responsible for their factories, and not just generally responsible for their workers' and peasants' state. The Socialist Unity Party proposes that steps should be taken to achieve more cooperation from the workers in the management of factories. For this purpose it will be necessary to create organisational forms which will make it possible for the workers to have a direct influence on questions of production, and other problems.

"This is our proposal, which is based upon the justified criticism of the workers. We should like to emphasise, however, that our proposal has nothing in common with so-called 'autonomy' or 'factory self-administration'. In a highly industrialised country such as the German Democratic Republic such experiments in self-administration would lead to confusion in production."

Walter Ulbricht stated that hostile propagandists had recently been making particular attempts to influence students in the German Democratic Republic.

"I should like to address the students not as a Minister, but as an old worker" Walter Ulbricht stated. "In my young days, if we wanted to learn something we had to do it after a hard day's work. Now we have tried to give the young people something which the capitalists deprived us of when we were young.

"I should like to address myself particularly to the students. The German Democratic Republic, the workers' and peasants' state, has given you more than the economy of our state could really afford. The working class makes great sacrifices so that you can study, and that is why the workers expect you to study properly.

"Under such circumstances is it not shaming that leaflets provided by the capitalists could be distributed without hindrance at the Humboldt University in East Berlin?

"Since the working class provides by its creative work the greater part of the means used for the universities, we propose that the workers should speak with the students on those subjects which are apparently not yet clear to some of them."

MORE ENGLISH AND FRENCH IN EAST GERMAN SCHOOLS

More English and French will be taught in East German schools in future, it was announced in Berlin on November 1st. Hitherto Russian has been taught as the main foreign language in all East German schools, and English, French and other language have only been taught as a second language in senior schools.

From the beginning of the new school year in 1957, however, either English or French will be introduced as first language for pupils at the age of eleven in a number of schools, and Russian will be taught as second language in these schools. In a number of senior schools Spanish will be added to the languages which can be learned.

Main reason for the change is the great increase in commercial relations between the German Democratic Republic and the western world, which have made necessary a larger number of young people able to speak the languages.

Language instruction in elementary schools is also to be reformed so that children who are backward in one of the main subjects such as mathematics or German will be excused language instruction. This will enable them to concentrate on their weak subjects, and at the same time will raise the level of the language classes.

"IS SOCIALISM ONLY FIGURES?"

Writer's Query

(Socialism is not only a matter of abolishing private ownership of the means of production: it is also a moral obligation. The road to Socialism is not so well-paved, and does not lead so straight as some people suppose.

That is the theme of an interesting article by Gerhard Zwerenz of Leipzig, published on October 21st in the East Berlin weekly "Sonntag". We present on these pages a condensed version of this article as an illustration of the sort of re-thinking which is going on today in the German Democratic Republic, as in other socialist countries.)

The name Leipzig first calls to mind the Leipzig Fair or the memorial to the Battle of the Nations in 1813. These gave Leipzig its special character and significance. But Leipzig is not only the fair and the memorial; it is half a million people, ricketty trams and worn-out tramlines, dusty streets and the stink of the Pleisse river, big factories and boring street facades.

Years ago there were other things in Leipzig too, but then came 1933 and its consequences, the air raids; Leipzig, like many other German cities, became a ruin.

And like all these smashed cities, Leipzig too tried to retain its old character, for cities, like people, have their own individualities. Today, eleven years later, a visitor wandering through Leipzig's streets, can see how different the city is. He may find much that is better and more beautiful than before, but he will also find much that is worse and uglier. Old ruins still stand beside new buildings, and the comfort and speed of a modern city is often irritatingly interrupted.

Just now Leipzig is something like the mouth of a poverty-stricken old outcast; the houses stand out like blackened, crooked and pitted teeth, and the sight of them often makes people bitter.

It does not help, either, to talk cheerfully around the subject. So much printers' ink has been wasted on highflown reports of new building, but bricks and mortar are what is really needed.

There are of course a number of new buildings, but there has been too much empty cheering in the past. It is now high time to talk of the piles of rubble still waiting to be cleared, and of the enormous number of houses still to be built.

Fascism and bombs not only destroyed the streets of Leipzig; they also destroyed its economic organisation and its cultural atmosphere. We often speak of the many small things which make life difficult, and it is true that innumerable minor ills wear down our patience.

Leipzig's cultural atmosphere is noticeably quiet. Writers, painters, sculptors, graphic artists, musicians and actors live here and work at their professions, go away on holiday in the summer and sometimes in the winter, and some of them even do some social and political work on the side. But still, everything is placid, nobody gets excited about anything any more on the banks of the Pleisse. What use would it be, anyway?

But perhaps it would be useful after all? There are people who think so, and who think they should bestir themselves.

There is a young graphic artist, for instance, who came here years ago from West Germany to study. His teachers were not always pleased with him. Now, after getting his diploma, if you ask him how he lives he answers that he manages somehow. But he believes in our new Leipzig and he works.

There is another, a young lyric poet, whose poems, I must say, do not please me a bit, and we cannot bear the sight of each other. But we can argue well together.

And there are many others too ...

But, you will ask, these are all unknown; what about the well-known artists you mentioned?

The situation is just this: the well-known artists are not at all dissatisfied; they are well known, and that is enough for them.

For ten years now we have lived and talked about Socialism and continued to believe that everything was fine, and that a well-paved road led straight ahead. But everything is not fine and the road is not at all well-paved, nor does it lead straight ahead. Those who sit and paint their pretty little pictures and work out their pretty little poems may have achieved a little fame during these years, but Socialism is no gentle little lake on whose banks a poet may compose his gentle little ditties.

Our longings for our bombed city are part of Socialism — and for what exactly do we long? Oh, how some people will shake their heads and point their fingers at me for suggesting that longing has something to do with Socialism! What! doesn't he know his economics? Why, Socialism means abolition of class differences and classes, abolition of private ownership of the means of production, and so on.

Yes, Socialism does mean that, but it also means much more. Socialism is an age-old longing; Socialism is a moral obligation, and it is what we, for whom it is intended, make of it. We studied for years with our heads in our hands to grasp the meaning of Socialism, to study it and research into it. That may not have been bad, for thinking and studying are necessary; but we forgot that Socialism is not only a matter for study and definition.

Sitting down in the park one afternoon, a man asked the old-age pensioners and young women sitting there watching their children at play if they were in favour of Socialism. Whether this was a clever question or not, the answers were certainly not clever. The old-age pensioners smiled and said their pensions ought to be higher. The young women complained about standing in queues and about the poor quality of many articles. If the questioner had been a bad fellow he could have taken this to mean that these people were against Socialism, but I do not believe that people who are dissatisfied and want to live better are necessarily against Socialism.

For years we have made the mistake of thinking that a person who was dissatisfied must also be against Socialism. As if Socialism itself had not grown out of dissatisfaction!

Socialism does not mean agreement at any price. Socialism means being critical and sceptical in the search for a better life. Those who are always shouting hurrah overlook the difficulties and are irresponsible or even dishonest.

But if the others, the dissatisfied, lead the way it will of course not be so peaceful, and whether the buildings and our new works of art will be better remains to be seen; but their agitation comes from warm hearts, and that is something honest,

also under Socialism. Warm hearts are always better than cold or frozen hearts, artists who speak out are better than silent artists, and argumentative artists better than acquiescent. Creative dissatisfaction is worlds removed from grumbling dissatisfaction.

Stranger, what do you hear when you come to Leipzig? You hear about the prostitutes who have turned some of the cafes into their headquarters. We believed that such things would disappear under Socialism. But they are there again, or are there still.

You see horrible paintings in shop windows. If you are an artist you hope that they will never be sold. When you visit friends you still find new copies of the old pictures of nymphs and fairies hanging on their walls, and if you are no art-lover you will probably buy one too . . .

Or you go to the comic opera and laugh, but you do not laugh at yourself, any more than the comic opera laughs at itself. With his "Threepenny Opera" Brecht made a frontal attack on cheap comic opera, but it was only lightly wounded. Theatre, radio and public is an apparently invulnerable trinity which seems to be able to resist for ever.

A few restless spirits are out to fight against all this, and many may think them mad. But they are not mad. Many may think they are not Marxists, and they are in fact not all Marxists; but I believe it would be a bad day for the Marxists if none of them were among the restless spirits.

In Leipzig and in other towns and villages as well, some people must get together to speak out and launch a fearless attack on the old rubbishy ideas. We have so much freedom and our aim itself is freedom, so let us take advantage of our freedom and be conscious of our responsibility for it.

That is difficult, you say? Of course it is. There are contradictions in Socialism too, and everybody recognises this fact in theory, but in practice they are frightened of it and talk round it.

Those young Leipzig people who want to change things will have to listen to plenty of criticism, perhaps even some influential people and institutions will object to their projects. And why not? Socialism is itself a conflict of forces, and that which belongs to the future will have to fight its own way. Let these young people say how they want Leipzig to be and let them carry out their ideas. One thing is certain, what we now have will not do; this is no Leipzig, it has no cultural atmosphere of its own, in spite of lectures, schooling and fairs.

Leipzig was once a big city with a city cultural life, with a sparkling atmosphere. Leipzig needs many things — a radio station and not just a provincial studio; Leipzig needs a theatre. Two theatre buildings are under construction, but more is needed than just that. Leipzig needs many things — above all a literary atmosphere, for it is a stupid lie that the workers would not stand it; they are waiting for it.

But, you may say, these are only problems affecting a small group of intellectuals, the belly-aches of a few artists and grumblers. The workers want something quite different; what do they want with a sparkling atmosphere?

I believe that a worker who takes the picture of the nymphs and elves down from his wall, who does not swallow every nonsensical-sweet operetta or every moaning song-hit, comes a step nearer to Socialism. Cultural atmosphere is not less important than the economic basis of society.

Most of our newspapers are still boring and colourless, the ideas of our times are presented in pale, thin tones, and many of our theatres are in danger of getting covered with a coat of dust.

We need a cultural atmosphere, we need a literary atmosphere. This does not place too great an emphasis on literature, but simply recognises the fact that literature is the best starting-point for all the arts. A literary atmosphere is like a fresh breeze which does not stop before signposts erected by timid people and then forgotten and left standing.

HOW MUCH IS TWICE TWO?

By Janusz Osęka

The teacher told his pupils "Note carefully, dear children, twice two makes nine." It was one of his last lessons, for he had just reached pensionable age.

After he had left the school, the other teachers were faced with an important problem: how should they go on teaching arithmetic if the children were left in the belief that twice two made nine?

After a short discussion, one of the teachers suggested that it would be a mistake to tell the children that the result of the sum was really quite different, in fact four. Such an abrupt change could leave psychological scars, it was claimed. It was therefore decided to recommend the new teacher to tell his pupils that twice two makes seven, a result nearer to the truth.

"The children will thus be brought gradually towards the real result" the headmaster told the teachers' meeting. And in accordance with this proposal it was decided that after a while the children should be given a result even nearer to the truth: twice two makes six.

The results of this method could not easily have been foreseen. The pupils reacted in different ways to this flood of numbers. There were those who simply wrote the solution of the moment in their exercise books, and continued to think of liquorice all-sorts and football.

Some pupils became internally rebellious, but did not protest publicly.

Another group got together, and asked the teacher for an explanation at the end of the class, but were put off with an excuse.

A small proportion of the pupils stuck to the first solution, twice two makes nine, since they were too lazy to keep on doing the same sums over and over again.

The well-behaved children enthusiastically wrote the latest result down with great pleasure.

The badly-behaved children covered the lavatory walls with shocking scribbles such as "Twice two makes four."

The careerists, looking ahead, shouted loudly in the corridors, so that the headmaster could hear, twice two makes three, or even one.

But nobody in the whole class had the slightest doubt that twice two makes four, since even the smallest child could count it off on his little fingers.

(This satire was originally published in the Polish weekly "Szpilki" and was re-printed at the beginning of November in the East Berlin weekly "Eulenspiegel.")

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

In Germany and many other European countries there is a sort of theatrical entertainment which is relatively unknown in most English-speaking countries. It is known as "cabaret", but has little or nothing in common with the floor shows or variety numbers known by this name in Britain and American.

European cabaret is in fact a political revue, consisting of a series of sketches, skits, songs and black-outs commenting, often bitingly, on the events of the day.

East Berlin too has its political cabaret called "Die Distel", The Thistle, which finds plenty of material worth satirising in the German scene. It pokes its thorns with fine impartiality into such subjects as remilitarisation in West Germany, and bureaucratic pomposity and boneheadedness in East Germany.

Thistle's Barbs

In its latest programme, presented at the end of October, the Distel finds a ready target for its barbs in the shortcomings of the East German press, and I should like to share one or two of the points with readers.

There is a short scene, for instance, in which a man is seen sitting at the breakfast table reading the latest issue of "Neues Deutschland", central newspaper of the Socialist Unity Party. He nods his head in approval at the article he is reading, and his wife asks him what it is he likes so much.

"This article is fine" he replies. "It answers very convincingly every point made by Eden in the debate on the Suez question."

"What did Eden say?" asks his wife.

" Oh, it does not report that." (curtain).

Now of course, like all satire, this short sketch may exaggerate a little, but I think that basically there is a lot of truth in it. There certainly is a tendency in most of the newspapers here to launch out in polemics against western politicians or newspapers without ever telling readers what the politicians or newspaper had said in the first place. I am not suggesting of course that newspapers here should devote their space to war-like speeches made by SS generals; but on important questions of international politics I think that readers should be given a concise summary of the exact proposals made by western spokesmen, instead of being left to try to piece them together from the counter arguments.

After all, if a Socialist newspaper has confidence in its arguments, and I think the arguments are very strong, it should not be afraid of presenting a factual account of what it is arguing against.

But to get back to the Distel. Another scene shows Mercury reporting to the council of the gods on Olympus on what is going on in various parts of the world. Jupiter asks: "And what is happening in Poland", and Mercury replies: "I don't know. I was in the German Democratic Republic."

The reply is greeted with a roar of applause by the audience, for there is unfortunately a lot of truth in it. During the far-reaching political reorganisation in Poland at the end of October, the East German press as a whole fell down badly on the task of informing its readers on world events. While newspapers all over the world were full of reports from Warsaw (many of the reports in the sensational western press were untrue, but this does not alter the case), the East German press simply stuck its collective head in the sand and said little or nothing.

Big Time Lag

As a result, of course, many people in East Germany tuned in to West German radio stations to find out what was going on, and got a pretty distorted picture, instead of the facts with which the East German press should have provided them if it had been up to its job. After a time lag of four or five days the press of the German Democratic Republic came to its senses, and tried to make up for lost time, but I think it had lost the confidence of quite a lot of readers in the meantime.

I believe that the key to this trouble lies in the fact that over the past few years the idea has taken root in the editorial offices that the newspaper must immediately take a stand on everything. Every event must be firmly categorised as a "Good Thing" or a "Bad Thing;" and if events do not fit easily into this strait-jacket then they should be ignored.

I was sorry to see that Karl Schirdewan, member of the Political Bureau of the Socialist Unity Party, apparently shares this view. On October 26th, in a talk with workers in an East Berlin factory, Herr Schirdewan was asked why the press had reported with such a great delay on events in Poland. He replied: "We first had to obtain full knowledge about the development in Poland ... before we could begin with the publication of this material. It is not the job of our press to start competing with the western press to see who can produce the biggest sensation."

I fully agree with Herr Schirdewan that the press in a Socialist country should not get in to the rat-race for scoops: but at the same time it should certainly not behave like an ostrich.

More could well be left, I firmly believe, to the good common sense of the reader.

Bottle - Scarred

Careful readers of GERMAN REPORT may have been puzzled by a sentence on page 178 of our last issue, which stated that West German Housing Minister Victor-Emmanuel Preusker, a former SS officer, had been "instructor on radical problems" to the SS. This was, of course, a confusing misprint for "racial problems". Many thanks to the Swiss reader who pointed it out.

Just in case any readers have never heard the old chestnut about the misprint and its misprinted correction, let me set it down here: An American paper, referring to a famous general, called him "that fine old battle-scared warrior". Next day, in a correction attempt, it stated: "This was of course a misprint: what we meant was 'bottle-scarred'."

I can only trust we manage to avoid the same difficulty. I shall have to read the proofs of these paragraphs very carefully indeed to make quite sure that we do not refer to Minister Preusker as "instructor on facial problems".

While on the subject of misprints, which I fear have become distressingly frequent again in several recent numbers, I should like to absolve our printers from any blame. Most of the compositors and readers who work to get this paper to press know no English, but despite this they let surprisingly few errors go through, though the comps have a distressing tendency to spell the word Republic with a "k" at the end, as it is spelt in German. Any misprints, however, are exclusively the responsibility of the editorial staff, and we hang our heads in shame.

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